

Reply to Office Action of September 25, 2008

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 15-17 and 19-35 are pending. By this Amendment, claims 15, and 19-20 have been amended, claim 18 has been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer, and claims 33-35 have been added. No new matter is added. Support for the claims can be found throughout the specification, including the original claims, and the drawings. Reconsideration in view of the above amendments and following remarks is respectfully requested.

The Examiner is thanked for the indication that claims 18-31 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Independent claim 15 has been amended to include the allowable features of claim 18, and claim 18 has been canceled. Accordingly, claim 15 should be in condition for allowance, along with claims 16-17, and 19-32, which depend therefrom. Claim 30 has been rewritten in independent form as new independent claim 33. Thus, claim 33 should also be in condition for allowance, along with claims 34-35, which depend therefrom.

The Office Action rejected claims 15-17 and 32 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Hawkswell, U.S. Patent No. 4,687,152, in view of Briehl, U.S. Patent No. 5,941,674 or Umetsu et al. (hereinafter "Umetsu"), U.S. Patent No. 5,289,625, and further in view of Schmider, U.S. Patent No. 4,011,475. The rejection is moot in view of the amendments discussed above.

Serial No. **10/825,361**

Docket No. **MRE-0045.01**

Amdt. dated December 22, 2008

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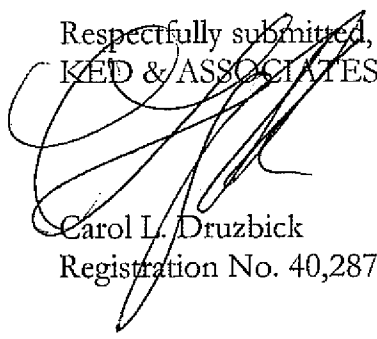
CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. Favorable consideration and prompt allowance are earnestly solicited.

If the Examiner believes that any additional changes would place the application in better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned attorney at the telephone number listed below.

To the extent necessary, a petition for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. 1.136 is hereby made. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this, concurrent and future replies, including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account 16-0607 and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,
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Date: December 22, 2008

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